

CLAIMS

1           1.    A method for processing airline reservations  
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:  
3                    receiving a request for the preferred  
4 category of seating;  
5                    determining if the preferred category  
6 of seating is available;  
7                    providing notification that the  
8 preferred category of seating is available;  
9                    guaranteeing the preferred category  
10 of seating;  
11                   assigning a passenger to a "flexible"  
12 seat assignment within the guaranteed category of  
13 seating;  
14                   reassigning the passenger to a  
15 different "flexible" seat assignment within the  
16 guaranteed category of seating based on another  
17 request; and  
18                   converting the "flexible" seat  
19 assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment.



3 assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of  
4 seating based on another request.

1 8. The method of claim 2, wherein guaranteeing the  
2 at least one preferred category of seating comprises  
3 reassigning at least one passenger within the at least one  
4 passenger's at least one guaranteed category of seating.

1 9. The method of claim 2, wherein the request is  
2 received when an airline reservation is being made.

1 10. The method of claim 2, wherein the request is  
2 received after an airline reservation is made and prior to a  
3 check-in process.

1 11. The method of claim 2, wherein the request is  
2 received during the check-in process.

1 12. The method of claim 2, wherein the request is  
2 received when a passenger inquires about a flight reservation.

1 13. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred  
2 category of seating is a window seat.

1 14. The method of claim 2, wherein a preferred  
2 category of seating is an aisle seat.



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1           23. The method of claim 22, wherein converting the  
2 flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs  
3 for all passengers simultaneously.

1           24. The method of claim 23, wherein converting the  
2 flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs  
3 when check-in begins.

1           25. The method of claim 23, wherein converting the  
2 flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs  
3 when boarding initiates.

1           26. The method of claim 22, wherein converting the  
2 flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat assignment occurs  
3 as the passenger inserts a boarding pass into a boarding pass  
4 reader.

1           27. A method for processing airline reservations  
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

3                   receiving a request for multiple  
4 preferred categories of seating;

5                   determining which of the multiple  
6 preferred categories of seating are available; and

7                   guaranteeing at least one preferred  
8 category of seating.



1           35. The method of claim 27, wherein guaranteeing at  
2   least one preferred category of seating comprises reassigning  
3   at least one passenger within the at least one passenger's at  
4   least one guaranteed category of seating.

1           36. The method of claim 33, further comprising:  
2           converting the "flexible" seat  
3 assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment; and  
4           prohibiting reallocation of the  
5 permanent seat assignment.

1           37. A method for requesting an airline reservation  
2   for a preferred category of seating, comprising:  
3           transmitting a request for at least  
4   one preferred category of seating; and  
5           receiving notification guaranteeing  
6   the at least one preferred category of seating.

1           38. A system for processing airline reservations  
2   for a preferred category of seating, comprising:  
3           means for receiving a request for the  
4   preferred category of seating;  
5           means for determining if the  
6   preferred category of seating is available;

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7 means for providing notification that  
8 the preferred category of seating is available;

9 means for guaranteeing the preferred  
10 category of seating;

11 means for assigning a passenger to a  
12 "flexible" seat assignment within the guaranteed  
13 category of seating;

14 means for reassigning the passenger  
15 to a different "flexible" seat assignment within the  
16 guaranteed category of seating based on another  
17 request; and

18 means for converting the "flexible"  
19 seat assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment.

1 39. A system for processing airline reservations  
2 for a preferred category of seating, comprising:

3 means for receiving a request for at  
4 least one preferred category of seating;

5 means for determining if the at least  
6 one preferred category of seating is available; and

7 means for guaranteeing the at least  
8 one preferred category of seating.



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1           40. The system of claim 39, further comprising  
2 means for providing notification that the at least one  
3 preferred category of seating is available.

1           41. The system of claim 39, wherein the request is  
2 received from a travel agent.

1           42. The system of claim 39, wherein the request is  
2 received from a passenger.

1           43. The system of claim 39, further comprising  
2 means for assigning the passenger to a "flexible" seat  
3 assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of  
4 seating.

1           44. The system of claim 43, further comprising  
2 means for reassigning the passenger to a different "flexible"  
3 seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of  
4 seating based on another request.

1           45. The system of claim 39, wherein means for  
2 guaranteeing the at least one preferred category of seating  
3 comprises means for reassigning at least one passenger within  
4 the at least one passenger's at least one guaranteed category  
5 of seating.

1           46. The system of claim 39, wherein the request is  
2 received when an airline reservation is being made.

1           47. The system of claim 39, wherein the request is  
2 received after an airline reservation is made and prior to a  
3 check-in process.

1           48. The system of claim 39, wherein the request is  
2 received during the check-in process.

1           49. The system of claim 39, wherein the request is  
2 received when inquiring about a flight reservation.

1           50. The system of claim 39, further comprising  
2 means for defining a maximum number of preferred categories of  
3 seating allowable within the request.

1            51. The system of claim 43, further comprising:

2 means for converting the "flexible"

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3 seat assignment to a "permanent" seat assignment;
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4 and

5 means for prohibiting reallocation of

6 the permanent seat assignment.

1           52. The system of claim 51, wherein means for  
2   converting the flexible seat assignment to a permanent seat  
3   assignment occurs for all passengers simultaneously.

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1           57. The system of claim 56, further comprising  
2 means for providing notification that at least one of the  
3 preferred categories of seating is available.

1           58. The system of claim 57, further comprising  
2 means for receiving an indication that at least one of the  
3 available preferred categories of seating is acceptable.

1           59. The system of claim 56, further comprising  
2 means for defining a maximum number of preferred categories of  
3 seating allowable within the request.

1           60. The system of claim 56, further comprising  
2 means for assigning a passenger to a "flexible" seat  
3 assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of  
4 seating.

1           61. The system of claim 60, further comprising  
2 means for reassigning the passenger to a different "flexible"  
3 seat assignment within the at least one guaranteed category of  
4 seating based on another request.

1           62. The system of claim 56, wherein means for  
2 guaranteeing at least one preferred category of seating  
3 comprises means for reassigning at least one passenger within





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7             receive a request for at least one
8 preferred category of seating;
9             determine if the at least one
10 preferred category of seating is available;
11             guarantee the at least one preferred
12 category of seating.

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1           67. A system for processing airline reservations  
2   for a preferred category of seating, the system comprising:

3                   a storage device storing a program;  
4                   a processor in communication with the  
5 storage device, the processor operative with the  
6 program to:

7                   receive a request for multiple  
8 preferred categories of seating;  
9                   determine which of the multiple  
10 preferred categories of seating are available; and  
11                  guarantee at least one preferred  
12 category of seating.

1           68. A system for processing airline reservations  
2   for a preferred category of seating, the system comprising:  
3           a storage device storing a program;















